10-Point YouTube Upload Checklist

A practical pre-publish review for clear packaging, clean captions and a launch you can measure.

1. Make one clear promise

Write the viewer benefit in one sentence. Check that your title, thumbnail and opening all promise the same thing. Remove claims the video does not support.

2. Deliver an honest opening

Watch the first 30 seconds without skipping. Remove repeated greetings and unnecessary setup. Show what the video will answer without inventing suspense or facts.

3. Test the thumbnail small

View it at phone-feed size. Identify one focal subject, readable text and a clear contrast hierarchy. Use the Thumbnail Rater for design feedback, not a guaranteed CTR prediction.

4. Check title clarity

Read the title aloud. Keep the subject and benefit understandable without the description. Compare a few Content Studio alternatives and verify every factual claim.

5. Listen and review captions

Check dialogue, music balance, names and unfamiliar words. Watch captions against the actual speech; fix text and timing. Avoid covering faces or platform controls.

6. Make visual changes purposeful

Review any long static passage. Add relevant evidence, B-roll or a graphic when it helps the argument—not arbitrary cuts. Keep an intentional pause when it adds meaning.

7. Finish metadata and disclosures

Add an accurate description, useful links and relevant tags. Check chapter timestamps. Disclose sponsorships or exchanges and confirm the rights to music, footage and images.

8. Choose one next action

Use a relevant end screen and a clear call to action. Test links, playlists and the suggested next video. Make the next step useful, not a list of competing demands.

9. Preview the uploaded version

Check the platform’s processed video, thumbnail crop, captions, visibility and schedule. Do not assume the local export looks identical after upload. Review on a phone as well.

10. Record a baseline for learning

Save the publish date, title and thumbnail version. Later compare CTR and retention within similar date ranges and traffic sources. Small samples and changing audiences can mislead; change one variable at a time.